

Details on the Influence of Soviet Socialism

Challenges of the New Socialist Government

- After the Communist Revolution of 1949, Mao Zedong and other communist leaders faced many challenges. First, they needed to restore order to a nation devastated by decades of war. In 1950, they felt compelled to send troops and material to their socialist neighbors in North Korea to help them fight against American troops fighting on the side of South Korea in the Korean War. Perhaps most importantly, communist leaders wanted to modernize China's underdeveloped economy while creating a new socialist nation, in which all citizens would share equally in the wealth. Only the Soviet Union had faced similar challenges—in 1917 after their successful socialist revolution. The Chinese turned to the Soviets for guidance and support.

Soviet-influenced Five-Year Plan and Collectivization (1952–1957)

- The Soviet Union provided support to the Chinese by loaning money and heavy equipment, and providing expert technical advice. In 1952 Mao and other communist leaders set a goal for the nation to modernize key aspects of the economy in five years. This Soviet-influenced Five-Year Plan mirrored the Soviet pattern of using technology and science to develop heavy industry, like steel and railroads. Concerned that western industrialized nations were hostile to communist China, Mao urged citizens to make sacrifices for the economic growth and survival of the state (country).
- In 1953 the Chinese government reversed the original land reform of the revolution that provided each villager with small, equal shares of private property. Again following the Soviet example, the Communist Party organized peasants into government-owned collectives, which often merged many villages. By 1955 China, with the help of Soviet aid, had achieved considerable success in developing heavy industry and increasing agricultural production. Communist leaders even spoke of China as a model for less-industrialized countries in Africa and Asia to copy.

Breaking From the Influence of Soviet Socialism

- Despite several years of economic success and the establishment of a stable government, Chinese Communist leaders eventually rejected the guidance of the Soviet Union. By 1956 it became clear that Mao disagreed with the Soviet leaders on the fundamental path a socialist nation should take to achieve communist goals. Mao felt that the Soviet Union moved too slowly toward communism. He believed they relied too much on machines and on a class of technological experts and not enough on human spirit and the socialist value of equality. As communist China asserted its independence from the influence of Soviet socialism, the Soviets decreased financial aid and withdrew technical advisors. In 1958 Mao shifted government policy and began a uniquely Chinese socialist experiment. He wanted China to move toward equality through great effort and sacrifice from the masses.

Picture Representing the Influence of Soviet Socialism



Here we see a propaganda poster of villagers welcoming Soviet technicians and fellow socialists who have come to advise them.